

Mr. J. Sam. Gunnell 58

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Ben. M. Phoebe

Jan 1820

Sam. Gunnell Jr

admitted March 16th 1820

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In selecting a subject for an Inaugural Dissertation, I am not unaware of the expectations of something new; but the limits which are put to the experiments & practice of Students render it impossible for them to add any thing of importance to medical science; except, so far as relates to their making use of the remedies recommended to them by their Preceptors. They can merely state how far they have found them usefull or otherwise.

Having some opportunities of practice on patients labouring under the disease called Dysentery, I shall therefore select that disease, as the subject of my Inaugural Dissertation.

Doctor Gallen says, "this is a disease in which the patient has frequent stools accompanied with much griping and followed by tenesmus. The stools, though frequent are generally in small quantity, and the matter voided is chiefly mu-
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-cous, sometimes mixed with blood. At the same time the natural feces seldom appear, and when they do, it is generally in a compact and hardened form."

This disease is common to armies and navies and places where a number of persons are kept confined, for a length of time. Though, it sometimes prevails as an epidemic, and occasionally with intermittent and remittent fevers, and ~~it~~ is frequently complicated with them. It is said by some to be contagious, by others not so, unless it be of the typhus type.

This disease that came under my notice prevailed as an epidemic in the neighbourhood of the Great Falls of Potomac River, in Fairfax County, Virginia. It bore very much the bilious type.

It occurred early in July 1819 and pre-

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This disease most commonly came on with chilliness and ⁺head ache, which was succeeded by nausea, high fever, pain in the bowels, frequent mucous and bloody stools, and occasionally green and black offensive stools. After a few days, the patient discharged a quantity of matter, which appeared like white meat that had been beaten or mashed into small pieces; at other times small round balls or lumps, about the size of a hickory nut, somewhat resembling suet. These discharges were frequently attended with and succeeded by a discharge of bloody water, not unlike the washings of fresh meat. At this time, the patient complained of great tormina and tenesmus, soreness of the ~~abdomen~~ and a peculiar watch-
-edness.

x It was seldom necessary to repeat this remedy if used in the early stage.

x It was occasionally necessary to repeat this remedy.

x It very frequently took double and sometimes three times the ordinary dose to act.

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Called to a patient in the early stage of this disease, I generally took from twelve to twenty-five ounces of blood, until the most prominent symptoms and distressing symptoms were relieved. This in many instances, had such a powerful effect in relieving pain, spasm, and reducing febrile action, that the patient would for a short time appear, as if his relief would be effectual; but this was not uniformly the case.

Shortly after the inexpressible relief of the patient by bloodletting, whether those disagreeable symptoms recurred again or not, I followed it by an emetic of Ipecacuanha and Tartar Emetic in combination; with which I thoroughly evacuated the stomach. The strong impression made upon the stomach by the emetic, had a great tendency to the surface, and seemed to act as an

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anodyne to all the local affections. Though there were many patients who took two or three times the ordinary dose to act upon them. Many of whom, discharged large quantities of bile; and others chiefly phlegm, but generally, the stronger the impression upon the stomach, the greater was the relief of the local affections.

So soon as the patient's stomach was composed after the operation of the emetic, I administered a large cathartic consisting of not less than from twenty to thirty grains of Calomel, if that did not operate in a few hours, I directed the patient should take from twenty to forty grains of Rhubarb or Jalap.

The Calomel would generally operate, not being much assisted by the Spessacuanha and Tartaric emetic that had been previously taken, this most commonly produced large dischar.

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ges of bile and other feculent matter, which was offensive in the system. The relief of the patient from this operation was very considerable.

In the early part of the prevalence of this disease, after I had exhibited remedies to the extent above stated. I gave Costive, Glauber's Salts or Senna & Salts; all of which were so disagreeable, that there were not more than one patient in five or six, that could keep them on their stomachs; and they, generally with considerable difficulty.

To remedy this evil, I for a while made use of the Jalap or Rhubarb in pills with considerable benefit, occasionally using Opium to relieve pain; but being disappointed with this remedy from the continuance of the disease, I determined to make use of that invaluable remedy

x R^o Opium 10 gr^s, Spicacuanha VIII. gr^s & Calomel XX gr^s
 mixed and made into ~~six~~ eight pills (I had
 on some occasions to make use of Rhubarb or
 Jalap instead of the Calomel in the above
 recipe; however pills were two or three hours.

x I generally made use of Injections of Castor Oil & Glauber
 Salts, fresh butter &c. to assist the cathartic action.
 I also used ipecacuanha as an emetic injection & Opium as a sedative &c.

a combination of medicine recommended by the Professor of the practice, which consists of a combination of Opium, Ipecacuanha and Calomel. This acted in a threefold manner, as an anodyne, diaphoretic & cathartic.

For a while, the medicine was repeated in three hours. The patients were generally profused rapidly; but where the first evacuation had not been sufficient, or the case was much more obstinate than common, I found it necessary gradually to increase the quantity of Calomel in each pill; sometimes to the amount of six or eight grains (this would not generally be necessary for more than from two to four times) this would discharge the balance of the irritating matter; and add greatly to the relief of the patient.

Soon after commencing the use of the combination of Opium, Ipecacuanha and

In some cases, I had about a yard and a half of flannel wrapped around the patient and made fast with thread a pin, which was much more easy to apply, than the narrow roller, and appeared to answer nearly its purpose.

The combination of Opium, Spicaeantha and Calamel was continued after the application of the roller

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calome, if the symptoms were not great
 relieved. I applied a flannel roller around
 the abdomen and breast, which extended
 from the pulis to the arm pits. The patients
 frequently would in a very short time
 after the application, speak of the great
 comfort that he received from it.

There were a few cases in which I was
 unable to induce the patient to wear
 the flannel roller in consequence of the
 great itching it produced on the parts
 to which it was applied. These patients
 frequently wore a cotton roller or common
 linen handkerchief around the abdomen with
 considerable advantage.

The roller is truly a great and valu-
 able remedy; it removes local torpor, pain,
 congestion, tension and other bad symptoms; it
 gives strength to the patient and adds
 greatly to his comfort. Previously to the

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application of the roller, I have heard patients complain of great pain and soreness; when they moved or turned; to use their own expressions, that "their bowels seemed to be rubbing or scraping against each other". After the application of the roller the patient could move, or turn himself without much difficulty, the affection of the bowels being somewhat relieved.

If the roller did not produce the entirely desired effect or where the patient would not suffer it to remain, I found it necessary to apply a large blister to the abdomen; from the powerful impression, which this produced so near the seat of the disease, the patient experienced such beneficial effects, as to render his state of convalescence speedy. I consider this last remedy one of the most

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I now tender you my ~~unfeigned~~ thanks for the advantages that I have derived from your several lectures. and conclude this unembellished statement of facts, so fully sensible of its imperfections that in submitting it, I have only to add that nothing short of the necessity imposed and the reliance that I have on the liberality and candour of the body to whose inspection it is to be subjected could have forced me to have exposed it.

admirable